1   In the claims:

2   1.   A software pay-per-use (PPU) system comprising:

3   a computer having a PPU software product; and

4   a mechanism that collects metrics data from the PPU software product and

5 transmits the metrics data to a remote location.

6   2.   The system of claim 1, wherein the mechanism includes:

7   a metering agent connected to the network, wherein the metering agent

8 obtains metrics data from the PPU software product.

9   3.   The system of claim 2, wherein the metering agent includes a registry for

10 registering the PPU software product running on the computer.

11   4.   The system of claim 2, wherein the metering agent communicates using

12 Simple Network Management Protocol.

13   5.   The system of claim 2, wherein the metering agent communicates using

14 Web-Based Enterprise Management protocol.

15   6.   The system of claim 2, wherein the metering agent communicates using

16 Desktop Management Interface.

17   7.   The system of claim 2, wherein the metering agent may be polled.

18   8.   The system of claim 2, wherein the metering agent resides on the computer

19 from which the metering agent obtains the metrics data.

20   9.   The system of claim 4, wherein the metering agent links to a metric

21 gathering tool for each PPU software product on the computer.

22   10.   The system of claim 1, wherein the mechanism includes

23   a utility metering appliance connected to the computer through a network,

24 wherein the utility metering appliance receives metrics data from the PPU software

25 product.

26   11.   The system of claim 1, wherein the utility metering appliance is located on

27 a standalone computer on the network.

28   12.   The system of claim 1, wherein the utility metering appliance runs as a

29 process on the computer that has the software PPU product.

30   13.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:

31   a usage collection and billing system at the remote location, wherein the

32 usage collection and billing system periodically receives the metrics data from the

33 mechanism.

1   14.   The system of claim 1, further comprising metrics gathering software for
2   each PPU software product running on the computer.

3   15.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:
4   a billing computer, wherein the billing computer receives metrics data
5   from the usage collection and billing system and provides a notification to customers of
6   the system based on the received metrics data.

7   16.   The system of claim 15, wherein the notification provided comprises a bill.

8   17.   The system of claim 1, further comprising a web portal that displays
9   billing information.

10   18.   The system of claim 1, further comprising a web portal that displays usage
11   information.

12   19.   The system of claim 1, wherein the metrics data includes cumulative
13   metrics data accumulated over a given time period.

14   20.   The system of claim 1, wherein the metrics data includes the number of
15   input/output (I/O) transactions in a given time period.

16   21.   The system of claim 1, wherein the metrics data includes snapshot data.

17   22.   A method for gathering metrics data from at least one software pay-per-
18   use (PPU) product residing on at least one computer on a network comprising:
19   collecting the metrics data from each PPU software product on the at least
20   one computer;
21   gathering the metrics data from each computer; and
22   transmitting the metrics data to a usage collection and billing system.

23   23.   The method of claim 22, further comprising
24   registering each of the software products with a metric gathering tool
25   corresponding to the PPU software product in a registry on the at least one computer; and
26   executing the metric gathering tool for each PPU software product.

27   24.   The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of polling each at
28   least one computer to obtain data from the metric gathering tool.

29   25.   The method of claim 24, wherein the steps of executing the metric
30   gathering tool and collecting the metrics data is performed by a metering agent.

31   26.   The method of claim 22, wherein the step of polling the at least one
32   computer occurs at an interval specified by the at least one PPU software product.

1   27.   The method of claim 22, wherein gathering the metrics data further

2 includes gathering data from a plurality of PPU software products on the at least one

3 computer.

4   28.   A method for auditing pay-per-use (PPU) software product metrics data

5 comprising:

6   receiving metrics data for a PPU software product through a network

7 connection; and

8   analyzing the metrics data for usage information.

9   29.   The method of claim 28, further including:

10   displaying the metrics data in a user-accessible form.

11   30.   The method of claim 29, wherein the step of displaying metrics data

12 further includes limiting access to customers of the product.

13   31.   The method of claim 28, further comprising

14   providing a notification to a customer of the PPU software product,

15 wherein the notification informs the customer that payment is necessary based on the

16 usage information.

17   32.   The method of claim 31, wherein the notification provided to the customer

18 is a bill.